

when the second and fourth volumes of some literary under-taking have been published before the first and the third. So it. "was with the Bougon-Macquart novels. Zola was no walking encyclopaedia. Every now and again it happened that he was not ready for the volume which by rights should have followed the one he had just finished. He lacked, at the moment, sufficient knowledge of the subject which that next volume was to embrace. Or else, as happened at times, his fancy or Ms feelings or some combination, of circumstances carried him onward, inducing to skip a volume for a time. But he always reverted to it afterwards, like an author who, writing not twenty volumes, but one, has passed over some troublesome chapter, yet harks back and 'writes it at last, well knowing that his will lack completeness and intelligibility if the gap be not filled up.

In the chronicle of Zola's career given in our chapters, the Eougon-Macquart volumes have been mentioned in their chronological order; but the example of the critics who, even since the completion of the series, have followed that same order in judging Zola's work is not one to imitate. By adopting that system one may certainly trace the variations in Zola's general style over a term of years; but if the series is to be judged as a whole one take its sections in the order in which the author

desired they should be read. This he indicated in "Le Docteur Pascal," and confirmed by word of mouth to the present writer; and it is unfortunate, perhaps, that the Trenchard publishers should still "list" the volumes chronologically, .th

ereby leading many readers astray. Some volumes of course—notably the first and the last —

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